



THE

KNIGHT

January-February 2000



VOLUME 22, No. 3. Issue #119. The LITHUANIAN Numismatic Association. Frank Passic, EDITOR

NEW BOOK FOCUSES ON KLAIPĖDA REGION

The Lithuanian Collectors Association in Vilnius has published a hard-cover 225-page book by Aleksandras Kubilas entitled, "Klaipėda, Curonian Spit in Old Postcards." This book is filled with color photographs of early 20th century postcards from the Klaipėda territory region, including Lithuania Minor to Königsberg.

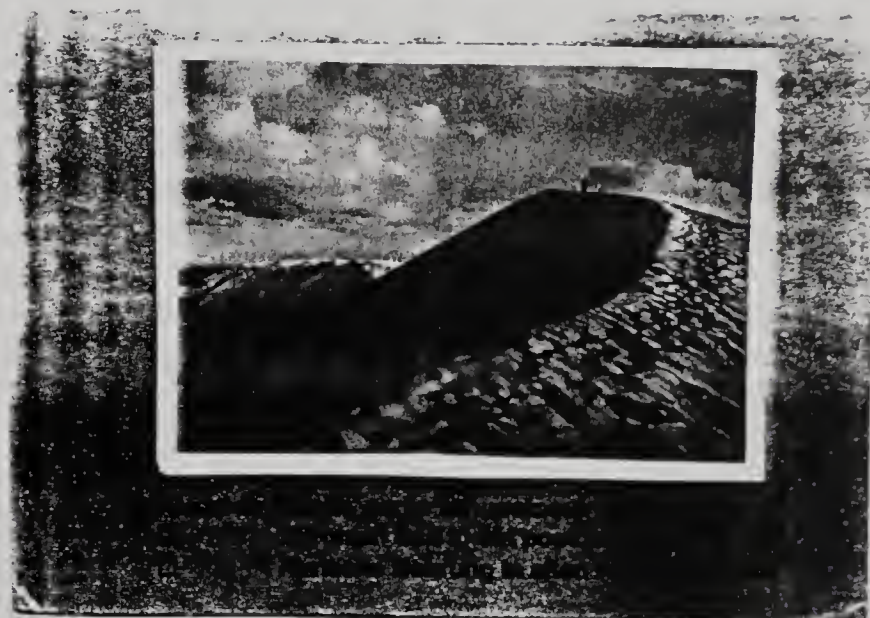
Other communities included in the book are: Juodkrantė, Nida, Sen. Pilkopa, Rasytė, Šarkuva, Krantas, Samgija, Königsberg, and the Courish Spit.

Although primarily a book containing beautiful postcards, the work is filled with supplementary illustrations of Lithuanian medals, the Klaipėda 1922 series municipal notes, military decorations/medals, paintings, pins, badges, and other collectible material of the area. There are several rare Memel/Klaipėda medals of the late 19th and early 20th century illustrated which are seldom written about that are found in this work.

Of interest are old postcards dated around 1900 showing scenes of Klaipėda. The author aptly shows that these exact scenes from the same postcards were used as the designs on the back of the 1922 Klaipėda municipal notes that were issued.

The book is tri-lingual: Lithuanian, German, and English, and is very easy to follow. The Foreword of the book gives an overview of the history of this area of Lithuania. The author has his own style of translating from Lithuanian to English, and the reader will enjoy the flavor of the text. Each illustration contains the tri-lingual texts, so the reader will not have to look in the back of the book for a "summary," as has been the case with some other contemporary books we have all read in recent years.

Included is World War II era material during the period of the Nazi occupation which began in 1939.



The book is an excellent resource addition to anyone researching this geographic area, and wanting supplementary material for their displays or illustrations. Collectors in several disciplines will want a copy of this work.

NEW 1999 LITHUANIAN COIN HONORS KĘSTUTIS



The Bank of Lithuania issued a new coin of on Monday, November 29, 1999 with the release of a 50 litu .925 silver proof honoring Grand Duke Kęstutis. The coin was based upon the 1975 medal of (Con't. pg. 5...)

REPORTING FROM THE FACTORY OF SOUNDING TEMPTATIONS

2.

By D. Visockas. Friday, May 29, 1998, pg. 10.

Translated by Algirdas Kepalas.

According to the director of the Mint of Lithuania Viktoras Miltakis, Lithuanians can be proud of their history of minting their own Lithuanian coins because it reaches even back to the 12th century, when in the territory of Lithuania circulated kapos, silver alloys of oblong form. Certainly only few were glad about this money, because the lesser Lithuanian kapa weighed about 107 grams, while the greater kapa, which appeared later, weighed about 180 grams. during the rule of Sigismund August (16th century), the minting of Lithuanian coins prospered when a mint for silver coins was founded on Vokiečių (German) St. in Vilnius. But the first coins of newly independent Lithuania, litai and centai, were struck in England, in the Birmingham and the Royal Mints in 1925. Only 1936 and later, litai and centai coins were minted in the mint founded in Spindulys printing shop in Kaunas.

History often repeats itself. Thus nobody was surprised when copper cents and 1, 2, and 5 litai coins of the restored independent Lithuania were struck, as before the war, in the same Birmingham Mint in 1991. But even before putting the litas into circulation, the Lithuanian mint was hurriedly being established. Equipment and minting tools were acquired from the Birmingham Mint, and in October of 1992 the Mint of Lithuania started striking Lithuanian aluminum cents.

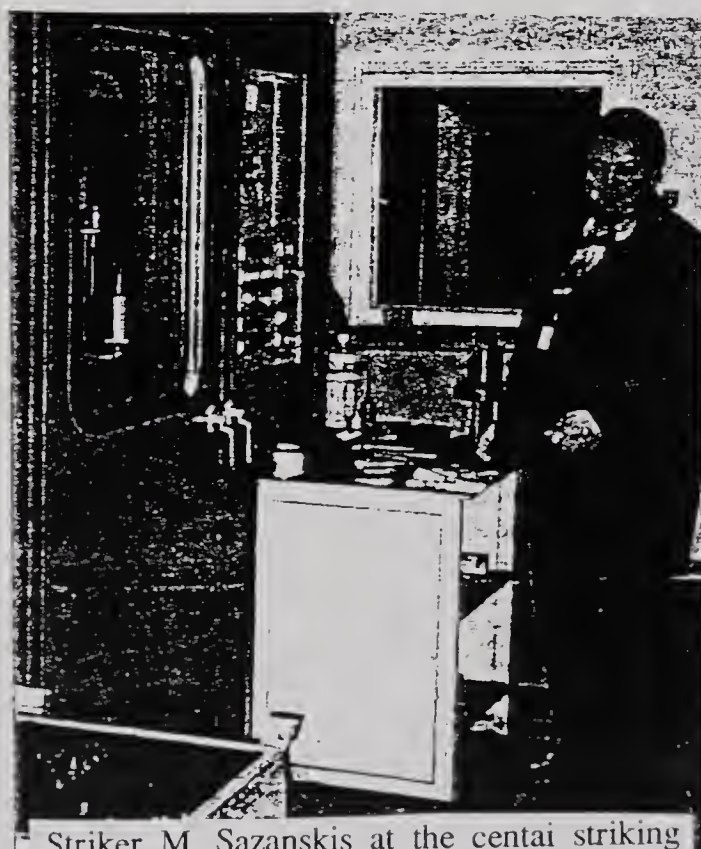
By the way, the small aluminum cents which were criticized and ridiculed by Lithuanians were born only because it was so decided by the leadership of the Bank of Lithuania and the government. And aluminum was selected as a metal inexpensive and resplendent in a color different from the ten centai coins. While deliberating the creation of the litas, the prevailing opinion was that small coins (1, 2, 5 cents) were unnecessary, but later it was decided to strike them.

According to the director of the Mint, it is not the small coins fault that they are not worth much. But it has to be conceded that aluminum coins are being struck in many countries, even in those richer than today's Lithuania. V. Miltakis said that apparently Lithuania will renounce small coins soon, but that this should cause no trouble. When national currency depreciates other countries act similarly. For instance, the smallest coin of Finland is 10 penniä. In Belgium even 50 centimes. A similar situation is in Austria, Estonia, and other countries.

On the day when we visited the Mint there vibrated a mighty Schuler (Germany) press which every second poured into the collector eleven 10 centai coins, warm from the pressure. One second, a litas and ten centai, a minute. seventy litai.



Sacks of centai ready for the bank in the hands of director V. Miltakis.



Striker M. Sazanskis at the centai striking machine.

Continued on page 4.....

1936 2 Centai KM-80 (Y-10)

1936 2 Centai

KM-80 (Y-10)

Weight: 2.3 gr.

Diameter: 18.5 mm.

Metal content: .950 copper, .040 tin, .010 zinc

Edge: Plain

Mintage: 4,951,107

Many Lithuanian collectors begin their hobby by assembling a set of the regular 14-coins issued for circulation by the Bank of Lithuania dated 1925, 1936, and 1938. Collectors have found that the silver issues are generally in plentiful supply, except perhaps in Uncirculated condition. Bearing intrinsic value, many of these were saved and hoards of them have surfaced through the years.

One of the toughest coins to acquire in the set is a one-year only coin and a new denomination at the time, the 1936 2-centai. There was a severe shortage of the 1925 coins by time the new Lithuanian Mint opened at the Spindulys printing complex in 1936, and a new denomination, a 2 centai, was added to the array of new coins being minted.

This coin was minted in Kaunas beginning in 1936. The planchets were prepared in Belgium and shipped to Lithuania where the coins were struck. The seigniorage was a "break even" proposition for the mint for the 2 centai. Although it has a mintage of almost 5 million, they were only released into circulation as needed. It is suspected that not all had been released by time World War II arrived. In addition, the small value of the coin contributed to their not being saved, and hence they are very scarce in high conditions today.

OBVERSE DESCRIPTION: The obverse of the 2 centai depicts the Vytis emblem in the center



with "LIETUVA" underneath. Fine denticles surround the rims on both sides.

REVERSE DESCRIPTION: Circling the field is a stylized oat wreath. In the center is found the inscription, "19 2 CENTAI 36."

TRENDS: The 2000 edition of the *Standard Catalog of World Coins* lists an example in Uncirculated condition at \$40; XF \$15; VF \$8; and Fine \$4. In reality, many "UNCs" are actually "AUs" or XFs. A true Uncirculated piece is extremely difficult to locate, and its price is often higher than uncirculated pieces of other denominations, even the silver ones. Even in lower grades, this coin is rarely seen in coin dealer stocks.

Regarding the three bronze coins dated 1936 in comparison, the 1936 5 centai too, is scarce, although not as much as the 2 centai. The 1936 1 centas coin, however, appears to be in more plentiful supply. How many of our members have been able to acquire examples of each denomination for their collections?

LNA MEMBER PASSES

We are sad to report the passing of a long-time LNA member, Ray Hafsaas of SeaTac, Washington state. His Knight envelope Nov-Dec 1999 issue was returned by the post office marked "deceased."



Dealer in
Quality Rare Coins



Karl Stephens, Inc.

Karl Stephens
President

Post Office Box 458
Temple City, Ca. 91780

ANA 57209
818-445-8154

DMITRY MARKOV Coins & Medals



E-Mail:
MARKOV@BANET.NET

Specialist in Russian
coins, orders and medals
& Eastern Europe incld.
Lithuania.

(718) 332-4248
FAX (718) 332-8676

P.O. Box 950
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10272

LITHUANIAN MINT

(Continued from page 2....)

4. Such is the efficiency of the powerful German made press. In the same room stands another pair of automatic presses which after a few days will strike shiny twenty or 50 centai coins. As director V. Miltakis said, they strike as many coins as the Bank of Lithuania orders. In the same room, next to the presses is the equipment to count the coins, uncomplicated to look at. Uncomplicated, but able to precisely count and, most importantly, able to "feel" 2,000 coins every minute and to pour them into a special sack. A minute, and a load of 5 kilogram weight and worth 200 litai is ready to travel to the bank.

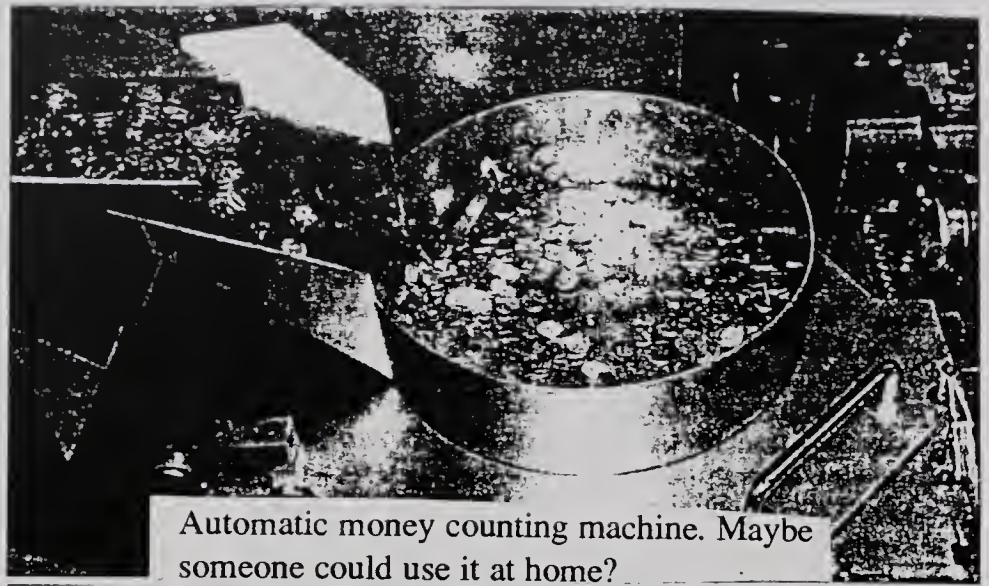
But this is only the end of the process of coin striking. In order to start the efficient, most

modern coin striking presses vibrating, the artists have to sharpen many pencils, manufacturers have to work long hours to produce forms and dies. To produce large amounts of coins for circulation, are needed more than one die. Dies are strictly uniform, therefore after wearing out one die coins are still being struck identical. Dies in the mint are made by very exact machines. This "smart" mechanism ideally repeats the windings of a large plaster model and after reducing it to the required size engraves the future metal die. Then comes the hardening and the die is lodged into the holder in the press.

As it appears it is not a complicated technology, but it seems so only at the beginning. Neither the mint of prewar Lithuania at Kaunas, nor the present one does manufacturing of blanks for the coins, but buys them abroad. Blanks have to meet rather strict requirements. The blank itself reminds the future coin only by being round. One necessary condition for a blank is that it has to have a raised rim. A rim has the struck coin, too. By the way, this rim does not only delimit the face of the coin, but it extends its longevity. Coins in the wallet or pocket rub each other with their rims, but their relief does not wear out. Thanks to the rim, coins are used twenty or more years.

Every mint issues thousands of commemorative collectible coins. They are more beautiful, more attractive, made from more expensive metals or metal alloys. The very first commemorative 10 litu coin for the occasion of 60 years since the flight of Darius and Girėnas across the Atlantic was minted in the Mint of Lithuania in 1993. It was struck from an alloy of copper and nickel with a rather simple die, but a year later commemorative proof and frosted relief coins saw the daylight. After another year to commemorate five years of the restoration of Lithuania's independence was minted the first 50 litu silver coin.

According to the mint director V. Miltakis, such commemorative coins are not for circulation, therefore they are struck in comparatively small amounts, up to 10,000 units, and



Automatic money counting machine. Maybe someone could use it at home?

are sold in the banks for higher prices than the nominal value. But this price includes handsome cases, capsule and label. Coin capsules create vacuum for the proof coins and prevents oxidation. Without capsulation it is not possible to save the shine and beauty of the coin.

This year we should expect in circulation metal litai, new, beautiful and different from other coins. These again will be of one, two, and five litai value. The one litas coin will be made from an alloy of metals of the same color, but its higher valued sisters will shine in white and in yellow metal. Five litai coins will have a yellow center, the two litai, a yellow ring. By the way, these coins will be easily distinguished by the blind people.

According to the director of the mint, coins alas, do not have any security checks like the paper notes, although mints endeavor to make it difficult if not



impossible to strike coins by non-industrial means. Maybe the simplest and yet the hardest to master detail are the serrations of the edge. Even more difficult for the counterfeiters to defeat are the edge inscriptions, nothing to say about pressing together of two metals of different colors. Therefore, it is believable that a self educated smith will not forge new 5 litai pieces, and it will not be worthwhile to counterfeit coins of smaller amounts.

Forty people of the mint should never lack work because according to the director in the countries of high levels of living, where there is much of use of vending machines, there are about 400 coins of different nominals in circulation for each inhabitant of the country. In todays Lithuania this number is about 60. But not counting circulation and commemorative coins the mint also produces government presentation pieces, medals for various occasions. By the way, every mortal can order a commemorative medal in the mint for his family or its celebration. Certain Hungarians have used this possibility to order medals for their relatives fifty year jubilee at the Mint of Lithuania. Medals for different occasions have been struck for more than one citizen of our country.

The production of medals, in truth, is not different from the production of coins, only the blank of required diameter is put into a stronger die and is struck several times. Of course, the thickness and diameter is different from those of coins. Striker and adjuster Mečislovas Szanskis showed us how in less than a minute from a blank of alloy of metals was born a new, splendid medal.

A bit differently originate government presentation pieces, medals, decorations. Here the artists take over polished and halfway prepared pieces and every detail is embellished manually. Enamel is spread, precious stones inlaid, manually. It is a lengthy and meticulous work, but necessary because the products will decorate statesmen, soldiers, meritorious persons.

WANTED

WANTED: Picture postcards of Lithuania and Klaipėda/Memel prior to 1945. Describe or photocopy with price(s). J. R. Greene, 33 Bearsden Rd., Athol, MA 01331-3401.

KĘSTUTIS COIN (Continued from pg. 1....)

5.

sculptor Vytautas Kašuba, and was designed by Antanas Žukauskas (obverse) and Petras Gintalas (reverse). This coin is part of a series issued by the Bank of Lithuania honoring the rulers of Lithuania.

The obverse features the Vytis emblem with the center circular area containing a pattern of diamonds and crosslets. The Columns of Gediminas emblem is found on each side, while the Lithuanian mint mark "LMK" is found under the front legs of the horse.

The reverse designed by Kašuba and adapted by Gintalas, depicts the Grand Duke in full regalia. The legend states, "KĘSTUTIS . DIDYSIS . LIETUVOS . KUNIGAİKŠTIS," meaning, "Kęstutis the Great, Grand Duke of Lithuania." In the lower right are the years "1345 1382" and a small warrior holding a sword in his right hand and a shield in his left hand. This warrior is adapted from the warrior depicted on the seal of Kęstutis.

The edge of the coin is inscribed with the same inscription as appeared on the earlier issued coins of the rulers series, a phrase taken from the Lithuanian national anthem: "IŠ PRAEITIES TAVO SŪNŪS TE STIPRYBĘ SEMIA *," meaning, "May Your Sons Derive Their Strength from the Past."

The coin has a mintage of only 2,500 pieces, down considerably from the mintages of 10,000 each for the 1996 Mindaugas and Gediminas commemoratives, and even the Grand Duke Algirdas commemorative of 1998, which had a mintage of 4,000 pieces. The Kęstutis coin was issued at a cost of 80 litai (U.S. \$20), although they are being sold for considerably more for by the North American distributor in Canada.

A brochure issued by the Bank of Lithuania to promote the coin carried a short biography of the Lithuanian Grand Duke, written by Dr. Alfredas Bumblauskas. It states:

Kęstutis, who was the son of Gediminas, the Grand Duke of Lithuania, and father of Vytautas the Great, the most prominent ruler of Lithuania throughout its history, reigned in Lithuania together with his brother Algirdas in the second half of the 14th century. In the historic consciousness of Lithuanians he is identified as the greatest organizer of resistance and leader of fights against the expanding aggression of the Crusaders' Order.

The joint reign of Algirdas and Kęstutis is related to the emerging dual state ruling structure. Algirdas continued the policy lead by Gediminas and strengthened the status of Vilnius as the capital of Lithuania, and it was Kęstutis who introduced Trakai into the history as the second capital of the state. While Algirdas guided Lithuania's policy towards the East that predetermined the future annexation of vast Russian lands to Lithuania, it fell to Kęstutis' lot to withstand the growing expansion of the Crusaders' Order along the river Nemunas and their yearly raids to Lithuania. While repulsing the attacks Kęstutis, in return, arranged raids against the Order and was concurrently seeking diplomatic ways out of the dramatic situation. On many occasions he took the lead in the negotiations on the Christening of Lithuania.

Attempts to adapt to the Western culture may have determined Kęstutis' character that was highly valued even by his contemporary enemies. In German and Polish chronicles Kęstutis was described as an ingenious, courageous and noble military leader, whose behaviour conformed the principles of chivalry.

LITHUANIAN NUMISMATIC DICTIONARY

6.

By
Jonas K. Karys 48.



English translation by
V.L.G. Matelis

Continued from last issue....



Aleksandro, Žyg. Senojo ir
Žyg. Augusto pusgrašiai.

PUSIAU-BRAKTEATAI/Half-Bracteates. Also known as "thin" and "wide" money (German, Duennpfennige, Breitpfennige), these denars of the middle ages, were struck on thinly flattened out denar planchets of normal weight (in place of the 19 mm. to 26 mm. and larger diameter), the obverse die striking separately from the reverse die. As a result of such striking of the coin, the reverse impression penetrated through the already struck obverse sides design and inscription, damaging them badly and ruining them. The classical period of such inept coins in Europe stretched from the 9th to the 12th centuries in Europe.

PUSKAPIS/Half-Kapa (chop). 1. Half of a kapa or 30 units. Earlier, 30 grašiai, later (and currently) in Lithuania, Poland and elsewhere, a half-kapa of sheaves of grain at harvest time, heads of cabbage, eggs and cucumbers, at home and at market. 2. The silver coin of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the denomination of 30 grašiai, appearing in the second half of the 16th century. Known internationally as the taler and gulden. The first to strike the halfchop was Sigismund August in 1564-1565 in Vilnius for the Grand Duchy. After him, Stephen Bathory imitated it, though unsuccessfully. The halfchop of Sigismund August was struck in about 0.735 silver purity, weighing about 28 grams.



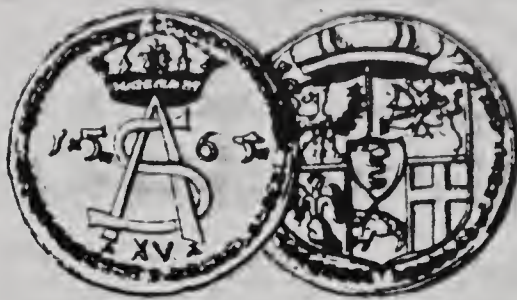
Žyg. Augusto sid. puskapiai. 1564 m. puskapio antroje pusėje sutalpinti išskiriamieji ženklai (herbai): Lietuvos Vytis, Lenkijos Erelis, centre Bonos Sforzos (Žyg. Augusto motinos) "smauglys", Volynijos kryžius, Kijevo meška, Rusios angelas.

PUSKRONĖ/Half-Krona. 1. Generally, a silver coin about 30-35 mm. in diameter and about 10-15 gr. in weight. An English 2 1/2 schilling coin (half crown).

PUSRUBLIS. See Poltinikas.

PUSTALERIS/Half Taler. A. Almost any silver coin of 1/2 taler. B. The 15 grašis coin of Sigismund August, struck in Vilnius in 1564-65. weighing about 13.930 gr. with a silver fineness of 0.735.

QUETZAL. The Guatamalan monetary unit, a silver coin consisting of 100 centavos.



Zyg. Augusto sid. pustaleris.

RAČKUS, ALEXANDER M. (1893-1965). A doctor of medicine, a collector of museum-type antiquities, a philatelist, an amateur numismatist. Wrote on numismatic themes for the press, and authored two books, "Gudonai--Relatives of the Lithuanian Nation (including their coinage, printed in 1929)," and "Cyclopedia of Lithuanian Numismatics (1965)." However, this field was beyond his capabilities, far removed from his chosen profession, fundamentally misunderstood, so that his numismatic works glitter profusely with strange conclusions, unsupported deductions, inventions, errors, and here and there, absolutely unqualified absurdities.

RAIDYNAS/Alphabet. The written symbols or letters of any language, taken together and set up in a given sequence. The Phoenicians first established letters about 1500 B.C., and various modified, they spread. In studying historical coins and other numismatic items, the student finds inscriptions made in many different alphabets. An accurate reading of these inscriptions and/or legends will clarify all secrets of the find. Therefore, as a first step it must be established to which alphabet the inscription on the find being studied, belongs, and secondly, to find means to read those inscriptions, and to understand their entire purport.

RAIŽYTOJAS/Engraver. A person who can make in metal or some other material, a design in relief, or a portrait, all the face of a medal, coin or token. A specialist in engraving, an artist.

RAPPEN. A. An old silver coin of Switzerland (Basel, Zurich, Bern) and neighboring provinces (Kolmar, Nuremberg, Schaffhausen, Villingen), introduced in the 14th century. **B.** At the time of the 1799 monetary reform in Switzerland, ten rappen made one Swiss batzen, and ten of these equalled one franken. From 1850, with the introduction of the French franc into Switzerland, one rappen equalled one centime. **C.** A billon or bronze coin of one rappen or centime denomination, of 18-19th century Switzerland.

REALAS/Reale. From the Latin, regalis, Spanish, reale, kingly, trustworthy, earl. A Spanish monetary unit, a silver coin, introduced in the mid-14th century, and remaining until the revolution of 1869-70. At first, the reale weighed about 3.5 gr. and was struck at about 0.900 fineness of silver, but ended its existence as a small coin, about 1.3 gr. The taler, introduced into Spain by Charles V (16th century) equalled 8 reales. Portugal early imitated the reale, until it became the milreis there. Maximilian I in the 15th century had introduced a heavy silver reale (7 gr. weight, 0.900 fineness) into Holland. Reales of various metals and denominations were struck during the 19th-20th centuries in Central America, and some other countries in South America.

REICHSGULDENAS/Reichsgulden. A German silver coin valued at 2/3 of a Reichstaler, struck in 1667-1837. Other German silver coins of similar weight and purity, struck from the 16th to the 19th century, were given the same name.

REICHSTALERIS/Reichstaler. A substantial silver taler, struck from the 16th to the 19th centuries in the entire decentralized German Reich, was in continual circulation. It was issued locally by the separate states, but following rigidly a metrological unity. The first reichstalers were emitted in 1524. Saxony's "Guldengroschen" was struck in 1500, and from 1518-19, the new "Joachimsthaler" of Bohemia successfully spread everywhere. Both of these had about 27gr. of pure silver and both equalled 60 kreizers, as did the gold gulden. Somewhat smaller silver coins of the German states were legalized as talers a second time in 1566, of about 26 gr. of silver net. They equalled 68 kreutzers of that time, but by 1580 they rose to 90 kreuzers. On the obverse side of formal reichstalers, there appeared portraits of the local rulers, or their coats-of-arms, while the reverse side contained the Reichs eagle. In addition to their monetary assignments, these substantial coins were used for many other purposes, to celebrate and commemorate more important actions: victory in battle, peace treaties, confederations, the births in ruling families, weddings, and deaths, natural phenomena, etc.

RELIGIJA/Religion. In ancient coins, religion had a great impact on coinage. To peoples fearful of natural marvels, a coin was not just a sign of wealth, but also in some sense an amulet, since: 1. Earliest coins were most often issued by temples, or held therein; 2) For many centuries they were struck showing divine symbols, and even [Continued next issue....]

8. THE 1565 TALER

By Zenonas Pažarauskas

From *Kolekcija* Nr. 5, 1998. Translated by Algirdas Kepalas

Europe started to strike large silver coins at the end of the 15th century. In the 16th century, taler coins spread throughout Europe. It was not a casual occurrence, but a natural process tightly linked to the main historical events.

After 1492 the continent of America is being intensely colonized. The Spaniards develop regions of Mexico and Peru which held very rich concentrations of silver ore. The Portuguese do not fall far behind appropriating Asian and African deposits of precious metals. (1).

Silver flows uninterruptedly to Spain, Portugal, the Low Countries, and other states of Europe. The number of mints is multiplying quickly (2). After a stagnation of a few centuries economic revival takes place. It does not pass by the mining industry because industry and commerce demand new amounts of silver for the production of coins. The acts of the Chancellery of Charles V informs us that income from silver mines of Germany alone at the beginning of the 16th century were more than 2 million guildens and that in all these mines worked about 100,000 people.

Other centers of silver production of Europe develop rapidly, too. The mining industry begins to use new methods of production. Old and forsaken shafts are being deepened, new systems of ventilation and drainage are being established. The industrialists take over many mines under unified commands. Silver mines of Tyrol, Carinthia, and Hungary become the property of Fuggers, bankers of Augsburg. (3).

The rapid concentration of capital through the auctions releases thousands of farmers-miners who become wage laborers. Many of them looking for the jobs settle mining regions of Bohemia. Here in St. Joachimsthal area belonging to count Stefan von Schlick miners discovered silver lodes. The count with the help of others starts mining the silver ore. To protect the mines he builds a fortress which helps grow the village. At the beginning of the 16th century there live about 20,000 people, mostly miners.

The enterprise prospers. At first the Count sold blocks of silver. In 1519 he received from the King Louis of Bohemia a privilege to strike silver coins which from the name of the locality, Joachimsthal came to be known in the whole world as talers. One side of the coin showed St. Joachim, the other the coat-of-arms of Bohemia. The coin weighed 28-29 gr., its fineness was about .800. In 1527 the Count struck 208,593 coins. It was a very large sum of money in those days. Moreover silver was four times more valuable in the 16th century than it is now.

Lithuania's first taler was struck during the reign of Sigismund August (1564). This was the time when the mint of



Egzempliorius,
priklausęs D.S. Madajui



Egzempliorius,
nupirkta A.Račkaus

Vilnius struck very beautiful and particularly highly artistically valued silver and gold coins of different values. Lithuanian coins were very much in demand abroad, because they were struck from metals of high fineness. Thus it can be explained why golden and silver coins of high denominations are so rare.

Especially rare is the 1565 taler of Sigismund August with the likeness of the king. There are only two specimen of this rarity known in the world at present. It first came to collectors' view in the possessions of David Samuel Madai, a collector who lived in Königsberg in the second half of the 18th century (4). This knowledgeable connoisseur of talers died in 1780. Eight years later there was an auction of his collection in Hamburg. The catalogue of the auction included the taler of Sigismund August, too (5). But it was impossible to find out who bought this rare coin. In Hamburg an almost complete collection of D. S. Madai was bought by an alderman of the city of Riga, Peter Heinrich Blakenhagen. But in the catalogue of his talers which described 6,689 talers, the coin of 1565 was not present (6).

Sixty years later a catalogue of another very gifted collector of talers, Schulthess-Rechberg is published in Vienna (7). This catalogue shines the names of some

Lithuanian talers and among them is our old acquaintance, too. In 1868 in Dresden was published a catalogue of the Schulthess-Rechberg auction (8). But with this catalogue, although for only a short time, information about the Lithuanian masterpiece breaks off.

In 1865 before the appearance of the catalogue, a Russian numismatist, Count A. Uvarov visited Vienna. His goal was not only salons of music, carnivals and getting acquainted with the monuments of Viennese architecture. The Count was an active guest of antiquarian salons and shops. In one of them he discovered the Lithuanian rarity. Bargaining was hard but the amount of 1,500 gold rubles proposed by the Count overwhelmed the stubborn antiquarian Josef Oberndorfer, and the Count returned to Moscow owning the unusual masterpiece.

At the beginning of our century V. Gartman publishes a catalogue of ancient coins of Lithuania and Poland (9). This catalogue includes the description of our famous coin. Its rarity is shown as R8 and its value as 1,200 gold rubles. This catalogue tickled the imaginations of quite a few numismatists. The catalogue table of rarity was composed on basis of the established tradition of Lithuanian and Polish coins. Thus it becomes clear that by assigning a coin the rarity of R8 one speaks about a coin of which there are only a few copies known in the world. As at that time there was only one known Sigismund August taler of 1565 in the world, it should have been marked by the asterisk of a unique item in the Gartman catalogue.

In Chicago, Illinois in the U.S.A. there lived a Lithuanian physician, Aleksandras Račkus (1898-1965). He was a very erudite and enthusiastic collector. He paid much attention to collecting Lithuanian coins. His collection even if not the best in the world, was distinguished by the abundance of varieties. It included rare coins and among them golden ones, too. [10. The collection included 11 ancient Lithuanian gold coins. In 1925-1929 there was published a postal card series of A. Račkus' Lithuanian coin collection]. Aleksandras Račkus became better known in 1925 when an until then unknown 1565 taler of Sigismund August, gilded and with a loop was sold in the Reichmann auction in Halėje (11). The coin was bought for 1,200 gold marks by middlemen from whom for approximately 3,000 U.S. dollars it was acquired by A. Račkus.

This was a great numismatic sensation.

How did Count Uvarov's specimen come into the collection of Marian Frankiewicz is not known. But at that time his collection in Poland, especially the part with Lithuanian gold and silver coins, was magnificent. During 1925-1930 Poland was in a difficult economic situation. After the death of this collector there were preparations made to sell his collection. But there was no one in Poland who would buy it.

The government which was interested to get the collection for the museums, was against its export to abroad. Nevertheless in

1930 the collection appeared in Berlin (12). Leo Hamburger bought the coin in which we are interested for 2,450 gold marks and later sold it to A. Račkus. It was said that for this second specimen, A. Račkus put down 12,000 marks. Thus Aleksandras Račkus became the owner of both unique specimens of Sigismund August.

In 1935 the Congress of World Lithuanians took place in Kaunas. A. Račkus was also invited to this event. He brought his collections to Kaunas, too. In 1936 A. Račkus was offered the post of the manager of the historical section of the recently opened Vytautas the Great Museum in Kaunas. He presented to Lithuania his valuable collections among them the numismatic one which included both 1565 Sigismund August talers.

THE KNIGHT, Volume 22, No. 3. Issue #119. January-February 2000. The official publication of the Lithuanian Numismatic Association. Aleksandras Radžius, Baltimore, MD, DIRECTOR. Frank Passic, Albion, MI, EDITOR.

Subscription/membership to Volume 22 (5 issues) a donation of \$15 or more. Write: LNA, P.O. Box 22696, Baltimore, MD 21203.

EDITORs ADDRESS: Frank Passic, 900 S. Eaton St., Albion, MI 49224.

FOR BACK ISSUES: Write: Sarunas Mingela, 46707 Stratford Ct., Northville, MI 48167.

The LNA is a member of the American Numismatic Association C-117903.

BRENNER INFORMATION PRINTED IN COIN WORLD

Our article in the November-December 1999 issue of *The Knight* concerning the sculptor Victor David Brenner, native of Šiauliai, Lithuania and the controversy surrounding his alleged "Barnauskas" surname caught the attention of the major numismatic publication *Coin World*, which featured our information in its December 20, 1999 issue, pgs. 1 and 16.

Coin World interviewed Edward Baranaukas of Schenectady, N.Y. regarding his research on the topic, which is being published in the January issue of *Lithuanian Heritage* magazine. Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of the latter may write: Lithuanian Heritage Magazine, P. O. Box 225, Lemont, IL 60439-0225 for further information.

10. WANT ADS

WANTED: The following Lithuanian banknotes: P-5 1922 1 litas (temporary); 1922 "permanent" series: P-14 2 litu; P-15 5 Litai type I; P-16 5 Litai type II, P-17 type III; P-10 10 litu; P-19 50 litu; P-20 100 litu. P-28 1938 10 litu. Sarunas Mingela, 46707 Stratford Ct., Northville, MI 48167-1721. (313) 845-2241 days; (248) 348-8123 evenings. smingela@ford.com.

FOR SALE: Book by Aleksandras Kubilas "Klaipėda, Curonian Spit in Old Postcards" (1999). \$35 postpaid. Also: *World War II German-Russian Occupations in Lithuania Catalog* (1997) \$35.

COINS: 1999 COINS in UNC! 10 centu 50¢; 20 centu 75¢; 50 centu \$1.00. Regular 1 litas

\$1.50; 1 litas Baltic Way commemorative UNC \$2.50. 2 litai \$3.00. 5 litai \$4.00.

KM-81 (Y-11) 1936 5 centai XF. Scarce coin! \$14.00.

TOKENS: Lithuanian Auditorium, Waukegan, Illinois. SET of 5¢, 10¢, 25¢, \$1.00. UNC! \$15.00.

BANKNOTES: P-7 1922 1 centas UNC \$45; P-59 1997 10 litu UNC \$6.00.

1920 Polish-occupied Vilnius notes (rare): 1 Mark UNC (stamped) \$75; 10 Marks XF some spots \$75; 20 Marks VF \$85.

Frank Passic, 900 S. Eaton St., Albion, Michigan 49224.

Want-For Sale ads are FREE to LNA members. What do you have or need?

PICTURE THIS



Pictured above is part of the group of attendees at our LNA meeting last August 14 at the American Numismatic Association Convention in Chicago. Left to right: Robert J. Douchis, (down) Michael A. Bearman, age 9 (who won a 1st place award in his age division for his display of contemporary Lithuanian coins); (up) Tony Tumonis; Frank Passic; Edward Mikutis.



ABOVE: Frank Passic (right) gives a tour of the Numismatic room at the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture to the Hon. Stasys Sakalauskas (left), Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to the United States and Mexico, on Sunday, December 5, 1999. The Ambassador was being honored by the Museum at its annual Excellence Award Dinner. He is a collector himself, and took a special interest in the display of the Klaipėda/Memel banknotes and other items.